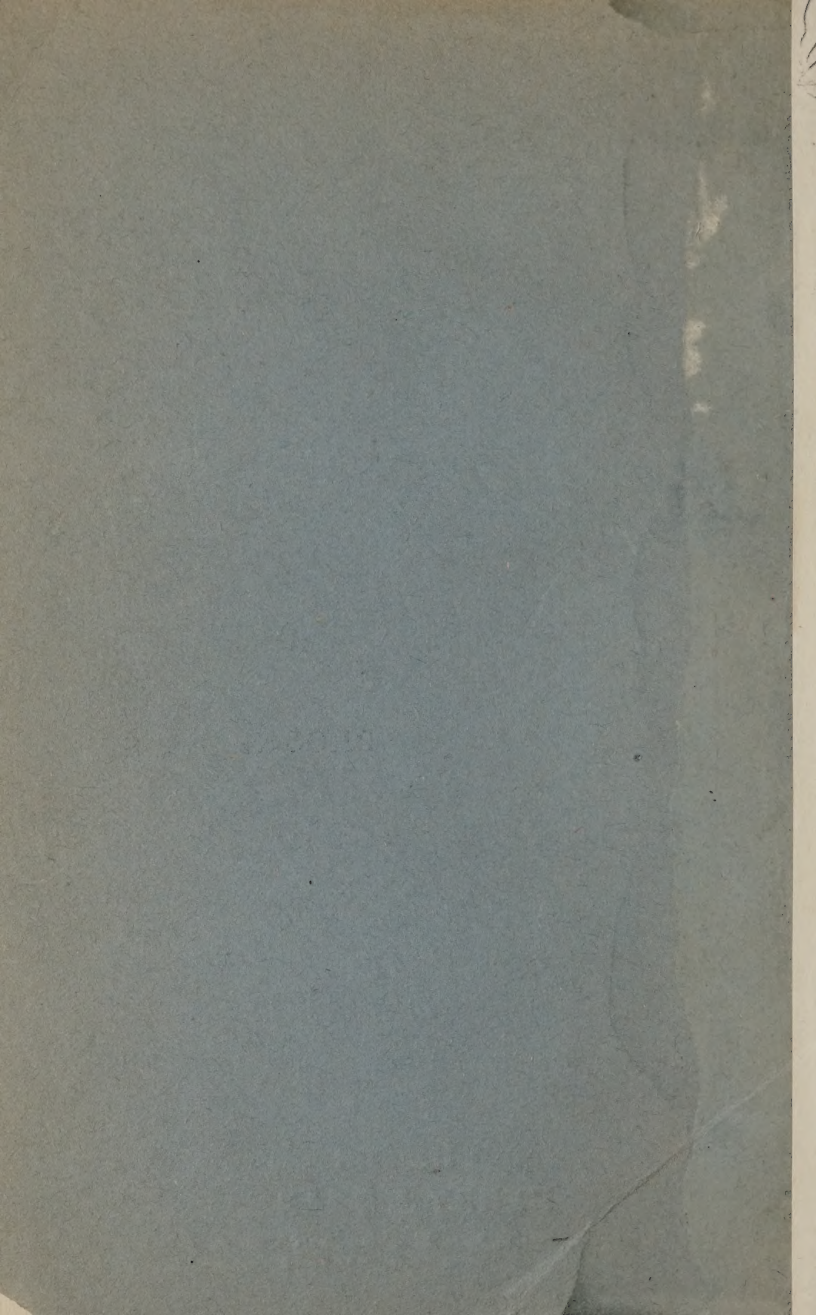


THE SHORT STORY

BRAYBROOKE



THE SHORT STORY

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THE SHORT STORY:

HOW TO WRITE IT

Some Hints on writing the Short Story

BY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS little book is written primarily for those who have an idea that they *could* write a short story *but* have not yet got the "idea" into print. It is also written for that more numerous public which thinks short stories "just get into print," and have no conception that the whole thing is an ordered process of almost mathematical reasoning.

I have merely worked through the stages of progress from an "idea" to the climax of the short story.

With the hope that this little book may be helpful to potential short story writers, I send it on its travels.

I shall be glad to hear from anyone who wants further help about their Short Story work.

PATRICK BRAYBROOKE.

Autumn, 1926.

PART ONE.

What is a Short Story?

IT must be noted by the student that The Short Story is a very definite form of art. It is no good saying that the Short Story is a condensed novel, when an investigation into the "make up" of these two forms of art reveals something that is essentially different. Nor, and this is most important, is the Short Story a *Long Short Story*.

Let me ask you to subject yourself to a feat of imagination. This is in itself practical. At every turn it is useful for the writer to use the faculty of imagination.

An idea has come to you that seems to be suitable for a short story. What is the nature that this idea must get, to become a short story? It has not got to be a novel or a long short story. You have got to create something that is a perfectly complete thing within certain limits. This is perhaps a working definition of The Short Story. It is "a perfectly complete event taking place within certain limits."

Consider a fine definition of The Short Story written by a well known American author.

"A Short Story is a brief, imaginative narrative, unfolding a single predominating incident and a single chief character, by means of a plot, the details of which are so selected and the whole treatment so organised, that a single impression is produced."

Having got your idea the first essential in getting to work on a short story, is to be perfectly certain *what* it is that you are going to build up. All the time you are building up the story see that you keep in mind what the finished article is going to be like. A builder who constructs a house, does not use bricks in a haphazard manner, he uses every brick with the purpose of its attaining its proper position. And why does he do this? Because he knows exactly what his finished house

is to be. He knows he has to produce a unity, one brick out of place and the unity is destroyed. So with the short story. When you start you must know exactly when each incident is to be introduced, why it is to be introduced. Why must you know this? Because you are determined to construct a unity, you are determined that your short story shall be a complete impression. You are determined that it shall be free from irrelevant matter.

Very well then; we have suggested a definition of what the Short Story is and have further considered that it is like a finished house, a complete structure. But naturally it is not enough to know that the Short Story is a complete structure, we have to know *how* we can build, that such a complete structure can be produced. All through this short book which deals with the making of the short story I want you to consider that we are in the position of a builder. Each brick brings us nearer to the completed house. Each brick has its particular function to perform. We know what we are aiming at. -We have said that the short story is a unity, a complete impression. We have said that it is not a condensed novel or a long short story. We shall find that a good many processes have to be undertaken before we have finished the Short Story. Each process requires special care and thought, each process must fit in properly with the other. We have before us the blank paper. We have an idea (any idea you like) for framing a mass of words, which will bear the dignity of short story. We know that we are striving to build a complete and definite edifice. So I shall ask you to build with me, to see in imagination the blank paper becoming a quantity of words, which all taken together, forms the Short Story.

I shall now ask you to think about the opening of the short story, that is the actual laying of the first brick.

PART TWO.

A.

The Opening of The Short Story.

THE first essential to bear in mind in opening the Short Story is to realise that you have got to create interest at once. There is no time to waste or words to spare. A dull opening, a "beating about the bush" and valuable space is lost. In a long novel, it is not so vital, if the start of the actual story is "delayed." It does not matter so much, if a few hundred words are written which give no indication as the nature of the subsequent story.

✓ But in a short story, the waste of even one word, is a fatal mistake. You spend fifty words that have no connection with the main idea of the short story and immediately you are impoverishing other parts of the story which need and need badly, every available word.

Naturally how you begin will largely depend on the type of story you are going to write. If the story is to be mainly about one central character, then a description of him, may be quite the best way of opening. On the other hand, if your story is to be essentially an "action" one, to spend much time on the description of a certain character in it, is probably not so necessary.

Mr. Michael Joseph has some very important words on the necessity of rousing interest in the very first line or two of the Short Story.

"The first few lines of a story have been well described as 'the author's letter of introduction to the reader.' It is essential to arouse the reader's interest as quickly as possible. Dull, rambling introductions are uninviting and the jaded reader (or editor) is at once prejudiced unfavourably. There is no room in the modern short story for any preamble. The violinist is obliged

to tune his instrument before he can play; the writer is at no such disadvantage."

It is very important that the opening of the short story should be harmonious with the rest of it. Do not forget that we are dealing all the time with a unity, we are building up something that must appear to the reader as a smooth running narrative. Very early in the story, besides arousing interest, it is absolutely necessary to indicate what is to be the pervading emotion of the story. Mr. Michael Joseph puts this matter so concisely and wisely that I give his quotation.

"In addition to arousing interest, the beginning of a story has another important function. It must strike the key-note of the story. A humorous story must be indicated by a humorous opening; the adventure story, love story, mystery story, must all have appropriate beginnings. The reader must be prepared for the nature of the story."

Suppose your story is going to be of the typical holiday magazine type. Suppose it concerns a typist who combines a holiday at Margate with a flirtation. It is important at the beginning of the story to indicate that Miss X had heard that Margate lent itself to flirtation and also let it be said that Miss X had every intention of making, if possible, Margate the means of exchanging a typewriter for a husband. Quite enough to make your reader know that the story is going to concern love, and probably as he desires, end with Miss X leaving her office and entering the commonplace villa, which is to her paradise, because it is going to be her very own home.

Or suppose your story is going to be a tragedy dealing with a murder. Introduce hatred between two persons, introduce one with a fixed idea that the other must be murdered. The atmosphere will be tragic and as your reader so desires, tragedy will be at the end of the story. "And Mr Jack Thunderer knew the game was up."

The very fact that in the opening of your story, there is an element of hate, makes the reader realise that excitement and murder will probably be found before the last word of the tale is introduced.

Or if your story is to be a mystery one. Make your introduction so that the reader scents a mystery at once. Suppose the story is to concern a haunted house, a theme that never grows out of date. You might write something like this. "Though the train was well lighted, though the travelling companions were cheerful, an inexplicable feeling of uneasiness gripped Jones, as he travelled through the dark and dreary countryside."

The "inexplicable feeling" prepares the reader for the fact that Jones is about to experience certain horrors which occasion his feelings of coming evil.

Pay then the strictest attention to the matter of harmony. See that the reader gets what he wants. If your story is to be of romance then introduce a romantic atmosphere immediately. Never lead your reader on a false trail, except of course, in such stories as deal with the activities of some detective. But take this as a general rule.

As the story ends, so let it begin and so let it proceed all through. Love at the end, suggest love at the beginning, tragedy at the end, suggest tragedy at the start.

A very dull conventional opening must at all costs be avoided. I give one from Mr. Michael Joseph's book, which is well worth quoting, as this kind of introduction is one that so many beginners adopt. It is the dull "autobiographical" commencement.

"My name is Edward George Eden. I was born at Trentham in Staffordshire, my father being employed in the gardens there. I lost my mother when I was three years old, and my father when I was five, my uncle, George Eden, then adopting me as his own son. etc."

This is the type of introduction which has but one result, it persuades the reader not to read!

We have now said something about the functions of the introduction to a short story. These are that the introduction should arouse interest at once and be in harmony with the type of story that is going to be written. This leads us to consider **how** to set about opening the story.

It is almost universally agreed among those who have studied the short story, that there are generally speaking three ways of opening the story. These are firstly, **by Dialogue**, secondly **by Descriptive Matter**, thirdly **by Getting right into the heart of the matter at once**. I shall ask you to consider in a little more detail each of these three methods of getting to work.

By Dialogue.

Probably this is the least popular of the three methods. It is also really the most intricate. It is most essential that when this way of starting is used, that the dialogue should perform some very special work. Thus with great perception Mr. Michael Joseph writes of what is required by the dialogue type of introduction.

"It must be remembered that dialogue is not used for its own sake, but to convey character, setting or incident."

This is of the greatest possible importance. It is mere waste of words to start a story with dialogue just because the other methods do not happen to appeal.

Some trite saying, or some pointless conversation and the story is strangled at birth. Hear Mr. Michael Joseph on the "attraction" of the dialogue opening.

"Dialogue may also be used to convey setting and, more frequently, incident. A dialogue opening attracts the eye and properly exploited, represents human interest, thereby fulfilling one of the two chief functions of the opening, viz: arousing the reader's interest."

Unless the short story writer has some very definite reason to use the dialogue form of opening, I should strongly advise him *not* to use it.

The Descriptive Opening.

As the dialogue method of commencing is probably the least popular, so the descriptive method is the most popular way of starting the story.

The descriptive opening is really a "chat" by the author and in a few words prepares the reader for the type of story he is going to get.

"It must not be dull, stodgy, conventional nor commonplace, nor put the reader to any mental effort to get a grip of the story. It must be terse and crisp and stimulate the reader's interest at once."

The descriptive method may be used for several reasons. More than likely the writer of the short story will want, at the beginning, to give the reader some idea of the environment of the story. He will probably have no further opportunity of doing this during the course of the tale. Therefore the descriptive opening fulfils a very definite place in putting **environment** before the reader. An example of this might be thus imagined.

The sleepy old cathedral town, nodding on the banks of the creeping river would have seemed, at first sight, an unlikely place for a world-shaking episode. ✓

This is sufficient to convey to the reader the fact that the environment of the story is a town unworldly yet capable of generating a world-shaking episode.

The descriptive method is often employed to convey character. I have already warned the writer against the dull enumeration of the attributes of a person. The description on the behalf of character must be done subtly. Here is a possible example.

Miss X always considered she was like a rose. But when you talked to her, you discovered that she was a faded rose.

Enough to tell the reader that poor Miss X though obviously unattractive, never lost the illusion that she was attractive.

Another reason for using the descriptive method is that it lends itself well for producing atmosphere.

Here is a simple example.

The wind howled round the old house and while those within heard its moanings, a few yards away Thompson was being slowly but surely strangled.

Here the "atmosphere" coincides with the crime that is being enacted.

We have then seen that the descriptive method can be used for actual **Description, Character and Atmosphere**. This leads us to consider the opening that gets right into the heart of matters at once.

Getting right into the heart of matters at once.

Modern people are undoubtedly impatient. They have a great wish to get at the root of a matter with the minimum of delay. Hence the writer of a short story cannot afford to ignore this tendency. It may lead him to consider seriously the advisability of dispensing with any kind of descriptive opening or preliminary matter. No rule can be laid down with regard to the kind of opening, it entirely depends on the type of story and it also depends upon what a particular editor requires.

Let us sum up what we have said about the opening of the short story.

- (1.) Interest must be aroused at once.
- (2.) Opening must be in harmony with the "emotion" of the story.
- (3.) Strike the keynote of the story.
- (4.) Use the method of opening which best suits your particular story.

B.

The Body of the Story.

Although I have divided the short story into three parts, the opening, the body and the climax or end, it must not be thought that the short story is a mechanical thing that always divides up in a mathematical manner. But in dealing with the *body* of the story we have to consider really the characteristics of the short story.

"The body of the story will display the qualities which go to make the short story a distinct literary species. The body of the story, then, is what we wait for, with it the true plot begins and ends, whether the writer prefaces some explanatory words or whether he plunges into his yarn without introduction."

Following the practice of many writers I shall consider seven points which are concerned with the body of the short story. These are Emotion, Incident, Crisis, Suspense, Climax, Dénouement, and Conclusion. In thus dividing I am much indebted to Mr. Esenwein's "Writing the Short Story."

We will examine these points one by one.

Emotion.

When you are writing a short story, you must bear in mind that there must be a large amount that can be defined as human interest. And it is impossible to have human interest detached from human emotion. Perhaps emotion can be divided into three, love, pathos and mirth. Each emotion you treat must be treated delicately.

Emotion will of course be conveyed to the reader by means of character creation and dialogue. But do not forget that the best way to convey emotion is by how a character acts. This is more unmistakable than conveying emotion by how a character speaks. "Actions speak louder than words," This is a good slogan to keep before you when you wish to describe some emotion.

Incident.

Incident laid on thick is very necessary in the short story. Things have got to move rapidly. The whole of the short story may be one big incident with a number of smaller incidents, or it may be a series of incidents, following each other in logical sequence. But the short story which is to be a success must not be detached from incident. In a long novel incident can wait sometimes for quite a long time, but this state of affairs is fatal in the short story.

"Naturally the nature of the story will control the amount of incident that may be introduced. The theme of adventurous action, at the one extreme, and the study of character at the other are far apart."

This is of course true. The great point is this. Whether the short story is of adventure and action or a study of character, incident must be the means of displaying to the reader either adventure or character study. If you are writing a short story of a drunken man and want to depict his

detestable character, do it by showing how abominably the man behaves in certain situations. Do not moralise on drunkenness.

It is very important to realise that incident need not necessarily be exciting. What is most necessary is that, in a short story, something should happen as frequently as possible. Consider carefully the following words from an American author. They are admirable in showing that events in a short story must continually "move."

"The short story differs from the sketch in that it cannot consist simply of a fixed picture, a description of a man in repose. It must show him acting and acted upon."

Here is the essence of incident, it is activity.

"Not everyone will go the full length with Stevenson in subordinating characters to incident, but few will dispute the dictum that in the short story the interest becomes attenuated when we are fed upon mere character analysis without illustration by **incident** of how the characters work out their inner spirit."

Do be most careful to use plenty of incident, do show your character by means of his participation in events, whether exciting or commonplace.

Crisis.

This is in reality the critical part of the story. It is the story. It is the moment when the destinies of the characters will either improve or grow worse. It is the step that will determine your climax. Sometimes it has been alleged that crisis and climax are the same. This is a mistake. Crisis in point of time is **before** climax. Suppose a person is ill. The crisis is the point when it is (humanly speaking) decided what will be the nature of the climax. On the conduct of the crisis, will depend whether the end of the illness is death or recovery. So with the short story, what the climax is depends upon how the writer determines the crisis shall be worked out.

All the early story, as far as possible should work up to the crisis. Stage by stage the story grows and arrives at the critical point.

"The foundation of the crisis is often laid early in the story. If this certain thing had not happened the ending would have been entirely different."

The crisis must be thought of as the highest point in the story. You work up to it and then when it is reached you "fall" to the climax. Without any mechanical idea, crisis is perhaps the half-way house. It is the "middle age" of the life of the short story.

And on the condition of this middle age will depend the condition at old age.

"Let the crisis be sincere, natural, emotional, momentous, decisive and you have secured one of the most important plot elements for your story."

Suspense.

It is a good rule that a period of suspense should follow each crisis. Suspense is the supreme art of making the reader wonder what is going to happen, and this "wondering" induces, in the reader a great feeling of interest. The attributes of the short story, crisis and suspense are very intimately connected.

"The handling of the suspense element requires delicacy and a nice judgement, but the most skilful literary manipulator cannot successfully work up an artificial suspense without a genuine crisis to excite interest in the outcome."

You must be careful to distinguish between suspense and telling the reader nothing at all. Suspense will interest the reader, silence as to what is going to happen and no suggestion of any coming excitement will simply bore him.

Climax

The climax in some respects is the most important part of the short story. It is what your story works up to. The climax must in no way be written in an apologetic manner. There cannot be any suggestion of "having to end the story somehow." The climax should be brief and to the point.

"Your climax may be quiet and contain no element of surprise, but let it be convincing and satisfy the reader

that everything possible has been made out of the situation. In the climax lies the mainspring of that totality of impression for which you have been working, so do not let it get beyond your control."

The climax is the logical conclusion to the crises you have introduced as you made your way through the story. As a rule the climax should be in harmony with the general trend of the story. This does not, in any way, interfere with the surprise climax. It does not interfere with the type of story, in which two persons seeing a red essence flowing from a large trunk conceived the natural idea that there was therein a body. It so happened that the "body" was a broken bottle of claret. This is a legitimate surprise climax, because the writer wished to lead his readers along a false scent.

It is necessary all through the story to make the reader long for the climax. The crises are the stepping stones and the reader must be led along stone by stone until he reaches the end of the story and is quite satisfied with the climax that is put before him.

I am at present only considering climax as one of the attributes of the short story and one of the seven points I said were concerned with the short story. I shall deal with the end of the story in the next section. Meanwhile I have to consider very briefly, the last two of the seven points of the body of the short story. These are *Dénouement* and Conclusion.

Dénouement.

This word really means an untying. It is almost exclusively used in the detective type of fiction. The *dénouement* is the process when the unravelling of the mysteries of the plot is being placed before the reader.

"The skilful writer lays the foundation of the *dénouement* all through the story, by which I mean that the *dénouement* is vitally bone and sinew with the rest of the story."

You must know exactly when to begin to let your reader "into the secret." Do not keep him waiting too long, so that he begins to tire and has no care as to how your mystery is really going to end. On the other hand do not give clues so

soon that the reader does not need to read the whole story but can so easily guess, that your story is laid on one side.

"The more obscure the mystery the greater is the necessity for keeping its outcome hidden until the last moment." There is one important word of warning which an eminent American author puts before the potential short story writer.

"Let the writer have a care lest the complication be tied so tight that no plausible way out is possible."

When you construct your plot, be most careful that there is a path from the other side of the intricate wood. Do not allow yourself to become inevitably "lost."

Conclusion.

I will here merely mention that the absolute last word of the story must be reasonable and agree both with the progression of the story and the climax.

Let us just summarise what it is necessary to think about in the make up of the body of the short story. You will have to be careful to ponder over the seven points I have suggested and see that each point plays its proper part. Do not allow overlapping, for example: Crisis must not usurp the position of climax.

We have now to discuss, as a separate thing, the end of the short story. We have, you will remember divided the short story into the start, the body and the end. In dealing with the body we have of course been bound to mention a part, that is in reality the end, as climax. The end must now be considered, as being the third division of the trinity of the parts of the short story, making a unity.

C.

The End of the Short Story.

We are now dealing with what has been obviously, the whole reason of writing a short story. The opening and the body of the story have but one use, they lead to the end. They are but auxiliaries and only matter in so far as they quite harmoniously make their way to the terminus. In a railway journey, it is the end that really matters. But it also matters, whether the train goes smoothly or bumps along with an uneasy suggestion, that the end may never be reached.

The short story is in reality also a journey.

"Everything leads up to the climax. All the threads of interest are gathered up and merge into the "point" of the story. The reader should feel a definite emotional shock, whether it be a surprise at the final revelation, satisfaction at the triumph of right over might, horror at the tragic outcome or thrill at reaching the high water mark of excitement."

There are of course various ways of ending a short story. Each ending will naturally require special treatment in the progression of the story. The astute short story writer will naturally write his tale in such a way that he quite easily and without undue effort, reaches the required conclusion. Let us imagine a few types of endings.

There is of course the very popular surprise type of story "in which the literary bomb bursts in practically the last line." The story must be conducted all through on the plan of leading the reader "up a gum tree" and the greater the surprise in the surprise ending, the better it is for everybody concerned.

I have already mentioned the mystery type of story and how the skilful use of dénouement is greatly needed. The mystery ending must in most cases be the solution of the mystery. It does not do, in most cases, to leave the mystery story, a mystery. The reader who reads a short story that is concerned with mystery, expects to be given, at the end of the story the solution of the mystery which has been perplexing him all though. And it is as well not to disappoint him!

Then, there is of course the very conventional happy ending, in which after a number of vicissitudes, the happy pair cling together rapturously and in the faint distance is heard the potential clang of wedding bells. The progression of such a story, will probably be a number of crises, leading up to the inevitable climax. But although the climax will be inevitable, this does not mean, that it must be so apparent all the way through, that the reader has no care to read the climax. What I mean is, that in the happy ending story, there is no room for surprise, however the happy ending is reached, it must be happy when it is actually arrived at.

Let me consider one more type of ending, which is rather popular to day, though perhaps more popular in the long novel than in the short story. It is the ending which is really no particular ending. It just leaves off in the middle of life. Perhaps something like this. "And James Johnson, in his back alley green grocer shop still sold bananas to those who were fortunate enough to be able to buy them." This type of story, will probably be but an episode, crises may be reached, but the climax is not sensational, it shows Johnson more or less settled for the remainder of his natural life. But this kind of ending with no ending, should not be attempted until the writer is practised enough and has tried his hand at the more straightforward, mystery, surprise or conventional finishes.

Mr Michael Joseph has some well thought out words on the subject of the most scrupulous care that is needed in the writing of the short story.

"Each (ending) requires different treatment but all require the most careful handling. As we have seen, the action is accelerated to the highest speed at a point immediately preceeding the climax. Every word is vital ; a false movement will at once snap the taut elastic of the reader's interest."

The following sentence which Mr. Joseph writes needs to to be considered by the short story writer again and again.

"Every sentence must be subjected to the most critical examination."

I would advise the short story writer to go even further and determine that :

"Every word be subjected to the most critical examination."

The story should be ended as soon as possible after the climax has been reached. After; the interest of the reader wanes and he has no wish to wade through a lot of irrelevant matter,

"The climax must be striking and yet convincing ; the reader must be denied the opportunity of criticizing it, even unconsciously, as 'far fetched.' It must appear inevitable, and in his lightning mental review of the

incidents of the story the climax must appear to be the one logical and satisfying result of all that has gone before."

To sum up. The endings, as I have said, may be of various kinds. Whatever the ending decided on, the story requires the most scrupulous care, not only in a general way, but even in the matter of the "right word" and none other.

The three points to bear specially in mind in regard to the ending of the short story are:

1. **Climax.**
2. **Denouement.**
3. **Conclusion.**

Let each of these attributes play its appointed part. When the end is reached, do not prolong the agony. When the story is near the end, do not let the death rattle be drawn out to an inordinate length. Finish naturally and do not strive after effect, and so spoil the situation by perfectly unnecessary padding.

PART THREE.

Concerning Plot.

BEFORE we can discuss the question of plot, we must naturally ask, what is plot? Plot is really, in its simplest outline, the argument of the story. It is the main theme whether it be a most elaborate plot, involving all the elements, of terror, death, murder and suicide or the most simple plot that merely concerns a number of more or less commonplace, incidents which go to the make up of the action of a simple tale.

The man or woman who wishes to succeed in short story writing cannot do better than spend much time and thought in the matter of the construction of plot. Various writers who deal with the plot, divide plots into several classifications. In this book, I divide plots into six kinds each of which kind I propose to examine. In doing this I am much indebted to Mr Esenwein's masterly book on the plot, which is perhaps, the most perfect exposition on this subject, that has yet been written.

I shall now deal with the six different kind of plots, in the following order: plots of surprise, problem, mystery, mood, contrast and symbolism.

Let us first consider the surprise plot.

1—The Surprise Plot.

Great care must be taken with regard to this type of plot. The surprise plot must be reasonable, it must be just as logical as the non-surprise plot. The working out of the plot, though it is to spring a surprise on the reader, should be reasonable from the point of view of realism. You will remember the type of surprise I gave: the red substance flowing from the trunk, which proved to be claret and not blood! This is quite a reasonable surprise type of plot and might quite easily happen.

"It requires the exercise of sound sense to devise a genuine surprise for the reader and yet make the dénouement perfectly natural."

The surprise plot is better left alone until the writer is fairly practiced in the construction of more straightforward plots. Unless he is skilled in plot making, the surprise plot may lead him to write impossible situations in his efforts to surprise the reader, with a result that the reader will "see through" the whole thing and become convinced that the writer has no idea of writing genuine and convincing surprise.

2—The Problem Plot.

This is an extremely popular type of plot and if it is done well, always interests the reader. The problem plot is best used in the type of story which deals particularly with character. The psychological writer will often resort to the problem plot. He will devise problematical situations with an intention of showing how a certain character grapples with the problem that confronts him. The plot of the problem nature will quite likely deal with psycho analysis more than with actual thrilling incident. The plot will be devised to expose the mental reasonings of a man or woman. The beginner in short story writing must be very careful how he handles the problem plot. It must not develop into a mere study of a character in which the plot is simply used as an auxiliary to bring out the characteristics of a certain person. The plot should again fall in line with the progression of the story, it should help in the analysis of character but not be used exclusively for that.

"The problem plot often takes up a character and concentrates a white light upon some typical life-crisis, with a swift suggestion of the upward or the downward path leading away from the crossroads of decision."

3—The Mystery Plot.

There is no doubt whatever that this is the most popular plot that can be written. Humanity is ever fond of mystery and the short story writer who can devise a good mystery plot, can be quite certain of "getting over the footlights" and also, what is more important, he can be quite certain that there will be Editors anxious to consider his short story.

Mystery plots are perhaps, roughly, three. The detective story, the general mystery story and the ever fascinating story that deals with haunted houses and their ghostly and genial occupants.

The writer must of course work out his own mystery plot, but let him be careful when the dénouement should begin. Do not, on the one hand keep the mystery up too long, on the other do not give it away too soon. Try and strike the happy medium. Keep your reader on tenterhooks, but let him see light, just when your commonsense tells you, that he is weary with the black darkness of mystery that you have so ingeniously placed before him.

It will be well here that you should consider a few points about the most popular of the mystery plots, that is the plot that deals with murder and the investigations of a detective. A few words of warning are most necessary.

When you are writing a detective plot story you have to bear in mind two things. The one that you have to create a mystery which appears to be too much for the detective to solve; on the other hand you have to see that the mystery IS solved by your detective. The detective must, of course always come out best, no matter how many blows he receives on the head, no matter into how many poisonous cellars he is thrust, no matter how many times he is shot at, he must never be killed, he must never be finally beaten by those who hate him.

The ghost story plot, must rely a great deal on suspense and the reader must be made to shiver and feel that he has no wish to leave the warm fireside by which he is reading, and make his way along the eerie and dark passages. **Atmosphere** is then most necessary in the ghost type of mystery story.

"As for the plain mystery story, its name is its exposition. It enjoys all the freedom possible to any short story, its only requirements being those of ingenuity, interest, and dénouement concealed until the close by hiding the real intrigue of the plot."

4—The Plot Of Mood

This is the plot that really concerns what we may call the inner man. It is the kind of plot, in a sense like the problem

plot, that concerns the conduct of character. It is the type of story that deals with the vicissitudes a man may experience in the search for some kind of dominant emotion, or the effect on a man of some perpetual emotion. Fear, may be the cause of a certain man's action, the mood plot, will demonstrate that all this man's problems, incidents, actions are caused by the outstanding emotion.

This kind of plot that centres round a definite emotion is not an easy one to handle. It requires that a consistency, within limits, shall, all the way through, be found in the character created. Very delicate and sympathetic treatment is required for this kind of plot, for you are dealing, not so much with the body, as with the soul, something that is more intricate and something that demands that you think carefully before you write.

5—The Plot Of Contrast.

This is an admirable type of plot to use in character drawing. For you have two or three people, and how they behave in the same circumstances. It is an excellent way of showing how various people behave perfectly differently, even when they are placed in the same environment. Take careful note of the following words, taken from a prominent American author.

"Contrast of characters may serve as foundation for contrasting environment and incident. The sharp distinctions of extremes, as well as the more delicate contrasts noticeable in closely related ideas and things, will be found full of suggestiveness to the writer whose eye is open to see them as they really are."

If you wish to show the effect of environment on temperament, you cannot do better than choose the contrast type of plot. Also, in some ways, it is probably the most easy kind of plot to deal with.

6—The Plot Of Symbolism.

This is a most difficult kind of plot and should only be attempted, if the writer is thoroughly practised, or is convinced that this kind of treatment is needed in the particular story he is about to write.

The symbol plot story is always the kind of story which is written to teach a lesson. "Pilgrim's Progress" is a classic example. The symbol plot is the attempt to teach something, when realism would be either boring or insufficient. Perhaps the symbol type of plot can be used for special emphasis.

But this type of plot should only be used when the writer is convinced no other method will do. The symbolism used should be familiar to most readers, and should not be of too intricate a kind.

I have now briefly enumerated the various kinds of plots that can be used. The beginner would be strongly advised, as far as possible, to concentrate on the **mystery plot** and the **contrast plot**. The former will be the best for him to use when he wants his main idea to be action, the latter will be the best for him to use when he wishes his main ideas to be the drawing of character by means of plot.

In working out the plot the following qualities should be borne in mind. A good plot story needs to possess:

- A. Simplicity.
- B. Plausibility.
- C. Originality.
- D. Climax.
- E. Interest.
- F. Commonsense.
- G. Fascination.
- H. Excitement.

Before getting to work on your plot, think carefully what kind it will be and also that it possesses, if not all (it depends upon the kind of plot selected) at least some of the eight points enumerated above.

Let me end this consideration of the making and writing of plots by a few general observations which should be borne in mind. When you write, always be absolutely convinced that your plot will make a really good story, that it is not too stereotyped, not commonplace, attack the business of plot-making with keen and ever increasing enthusiasm.

It will be well for you to ponder over what Mr. Michael Joseph has to say on the difference between plot and narrative, for quite often young and inexperienced short story writers confuse these two parts of the short story.

"The essential point of difference between plot and narrative lies in a feature of the former which may be called Complication. In narrative, events are described in a straightforward manner, and usually in their natural sequence; in a plot the happenings are **complicated**.

I would as strongly as possible urge all inexperienced writers to start, what may be called, a Plot Book. Anything that comes into your mind that seems likely to make a good plot should be jotted down at once, or the idea, possibly a useful one, may be irretrievably lost.

In this plot book, should be put any situations that you may come across in the ordinary events of the day. Even if they do not **at once** suggest a plot, keep them by you, later they may quite easily work in with other ideas, and the combination may produce a workable plot. Never despise the most ordinary incident, put it down in your plot book, it may be the spark that sets fire to the train, that ignites and blows your plot into being, to use a mixed metaphor.

Edgar Allan Poe writing of the fact that every situation in your plot must be vital says in this admirable manner :

"A mere succession of incidents will not constitute a plot. A plot, properly understood, is perfect inasmuch as we shall find ourselves unable to detach from it or disarrange any single incident involved without destruction to the mass."

It is not bad practice to get hold of some famous short story, examine the plot, memorise it and re-write it in outline. Then consider in which **kind** of plot it comes.

"Gradually a study of good short stories will enable you to realise all you want to know about plots."

This statement though sensible up to a point, is too sweeping. Nothing will tell you **all** you want to know about plots, except the continual writing of your own plots, the continual feeling that they must be done better, the continual feeling that plots

are on every side of you, the continual feeling that so much of your subsequent success or failure as a writer of the short story, depends upon your skilful manufacture and finish of plot.

With regard to the finding of plots, I cannot do better than quote what Mr. Michael Joseph has to say :

“The most fruitful source of inspiration is probably the newspaper. Under the matter of fact surface of police court and county court proceedings the drama of humanity in all its aspects is revealed daily to any observant eye. Newspaper paragraphs often contain the germ of an idea. It is this germ you want. Adapt it, modify it, develop it, chew it over in your mind and your plot presently begins to formulate.”

In conclusion : **be most punctilious in the getting and making of plots and remember that a good plot is a very very long way on the road that leads to success. Also be equally certain that poor, dull plots lead a very very long way along the road which leads to disillusion and subsequent failure. Wherefore be “mad” on the fixed idea, that the thing that matters is plot served up with all the ingenuity and cunning that belongs to yourself.**

PART FOUR.

Characterisation.

A GOOD deal of the success or failure of your Short Story will quite naturally depend upon the question of characterisation. If your story is essentially an action story, be very careful that you do not on that account leave out the skilful drawing of character. On the other hand, if your story is essentially a character story, do not consider *any* "action" beneath your dignity.

When you are drawing character, it is most necessary to try and put yourself into the mind of the reader. It is well to remember that many readers are intensely interested in character, they like to know exactly *how* they behave, *why* they behave in such a manner, *what* they look like, *how* they speak, what is their attitude to life, whether they are pessimists or optimists.

"Even in that type of story which concerns itself least with character, namely, the action story, there must be sufficient plausibility and reality about the characters to justify their existence. At the other extreme, in stories which definitely exploit character as their theme, the problem of characterisation becomes supremely important."

Characters must on no account ever be just put in for the sake of making someone bear the brunt of the action. Each character has a very definite function to perform in the short story. Each character should have some very definite bearing on the working out of the plot.

It will be very necessary here to say something about the various ways in which character can be depicted to the reader. Characters can be shown by means of action, description or conversation.

Let us consider these three methods in a little more detail.

A.

Action.

This is probably the best possible way of creating character. It is showing a person's character by **what** he does. Suppose a character is naturally an impatient person. How well this can be demonstrated, by saying that : "Mr. X. never sat in a chair for a moment, without giving the impression that he would be far happier walking about the room. The nervous crossing and recrossing of his thin legs suggested his innate impatience."

Here the clue to the impatient temperament of Mr. X. is indicated by his "crossing and recrossing his thin legs" it is description by action. For do not forget that though all characters must be described for the reader, there is a vast difference between **description by showing action** and **description by description**, that is by a kind of pen portrait.

The only part of this **description by action** which may possibly be described as **description by description** is where it is suggested that the unfortunate Mr. X's legs are thin. What you must aim at is a combination of description of character by the mixture of action and straightforward description. Though the three methods of description **can** be done separately, they can also be combined and it is well to bear this fact in mind.

B,

Description.

This is just simple pen painting. You wish to describe Mr. X without denoting any action of his. Mr. X was a thin-lipped man of forty-five. Sometimes the plain description is useful for introducing a character, and this introduction **can** be followed by **action**. Thus, after you have stated simply that Mr. X was a man of forty-five, you **can** go on to say : As he answered, his eyes involuntarily strayed from the gaze of his questioner. Here by **action** you describe that Mr. X is not above a "shady business" if it is thrust upon him.

If possible you should avoid the mere simple descriptive method of denoting character, it becomes very easily dull, a mere string of attributes telling nothing essential about the

character at all. Yet bear this in mind, it is sometimes useful as a **preliminary introduction** to the type of man, about whom you are going to write intimately by means of **action**.

C.

Conversation.

This is of course the method of depicting character by means of what the persons created in your short story, talk about. It is quite a good way of describing types of character by making them talk. I shall not say anything further here with regard to this method of description, as the uses of dialogue are dealt with in the next part.

Let us proceed to some general observations that will help the writer of the short story in creating interesting and arresting type of characters.

The writer who is going to succeed in the difficult task of creating interesting characters to adorn his pages must be an observant observer of life. Nothing is too insignificant. He must note with all his being, what it is which marks the essential characteristics of his friends. Let him consider what it is beyond his physical differences, that makes Jones perfectly different to Robinson. On the value of close observation I ask you to consider the following quotation from Mr. Michael Joseph.

"The young writer should assiduously practice the invaluable art of personal observation. Study all the varying types of humanity with whom you come in contact. Try to visualise their outlook on life ; compare the philosophy of the tramp with that of the footman. Note the differing conditions under which people live."

And then comes a most important piece of advice which the young writer should place over his writing desk. It concerns the **little** personal habits that give the clue to character.

"Note particularly how little concrete things reveal character—a cheap watch, brooch, a monocle, a man's purse, a gold topped stick, a decolete dress, rouge and

perfume, a button hole, a celluloid collar, a ready-made bow tie all, such small details are invaluable in depicting characters and types."

It would be good practise for you to consider **what** characteristics are depicted by the ingenious details mentioned by Mr. Joseph.

Observation of your friends' characteristics is not sufficient, you should write them down on paper, Suppose your friend Jones continually bites his nails, write down on paper, what kind of characteristic, you think this shows. You come to the conclusion that it shows either bad temper or impatience. Very well. Here is your practical work. You write a short story. The main character you create is both bad tempered and impatient. You want to show these characteristics by means of a certain action of the individual. You remember that your friend Jones bit his nails. You remember further, that you put down on paper that **he** was both bad tempered and impatient. So let your character sometimes bite his nails! Further this will please the bad tempered reader, who will like to feel that at anyrate **he** though bad tempered, does **not** bite his nails. Making the reader feel superior to the unattractive characters of your short story is a great step towards success. Observation of even the smallest details of various types of humanity is a most practical step in the building up of character.

A word or two is necessary to warn those who concentrate largely on the creation of the **character** type of short story. Remember, that as a general rule, the long novel is better adapted to the exclusive creation of character as against incident, than the short story. I do not of course mean that the majority of your short stories need necessarily be concerned with incident, but do not disregard the good advice, that on the whole the acute study of character is better suited to the long novel than to the short story.

If you have a choice of two short stories, each of which you feel confident you can do equally well, a story of incident or a story of character, it is wiser to choose the former.

The reason for this is that, in a short story the task of developing a character in a more or less confined space is the reverse of easy.

In the short story, when creating character, do not attempt too much. In this way, let your character concentrate on showing one particular attribute of himself. You have not, in the short story, opportunity to make him too "versatile."

"In a short story character should stand out in sharp relief. This applies especially to the leading personages of the story. Thus one person may represent Cruelty, another Devotion, another Ambition and so on."

To sum up:

Pay a great deal of attention to the interesting creation of character and realise that it is an important part of the short story. At the same time, realise that as a general rule, the short story is better adapted to a full display of incident, rather than an elaborate creation of character,

When you are drawing character, try to visualise what your reader requires. Realise that character can be depicted by the three methods, which we have already studied. Concentrate on the importance of the observation of the habits of your friends and how certain habits denote certain characteristics.

Never let your character do anything that is not of some use in developing the theme of your story, or working out your plot. Never create character just for the sake of adding some person to your story.

Make your characters live, but at the same time do not forget that their place in "Life" is in the regions of cold print. So you must, while making them realistic, at the same time make them attractive. In a limited degree make your characters extraordinary, but never wantonly exaggerated.

PART FIVE.

Dialogue.

It would probably be an impossibility to conceive of any short story which did not need some dialogue. The ability to write good and interesting conversation is an asset to any potential short story writer.

Dialogue, like character, should always have some special function to perform. Dialogue should never be allowed to "intrude" on the short story. It is no good making people talk, just for the sake of talking. Dialogue that serves no definite purpose does far more harm than good, it is unconvincing, unreal and makes the characters mere puppets uttering inanities, when they should be "live" and capable of uttering remarks that help the progress of the story or the delineation of the character.

Dialogue makes the story "human," it acts quite often as a means of description, and livens up the story considerably. And also, what is the most important thing of all, good dialogue attracts the eye of the Editor!

We may as well for practical purposes say that Dialogue has three special functions to perform in the Short Story.

Firstly. To Convey Background.

Secondly. To Keep The Action Going.

Thirdly. To Describe Character.

Let us take each of these functions of dialogue in a little detail.

(A)

To Convey Background.

This can be conveyed admirably by means of Dialogue. By the type of conversation, it is often easy to imagine the setting of the scene. "I hate" she said angrily "the cruel

loneliness of this wind swept moor." This line of dialogue, conveys the background far more emphatically, than a page of mere description.

And it also saves valuable space, a most important consideration in the short story. Use dialogue, whenever you consider that it will play the part of introducing the reader to the scene in which the story is placed.

(B)

To Keep The Action Going.

This is when dialogue, as it were, keeps the story in continuous movement. You wish to suggest, in an adventure type of short story, that things are moving and you wish to convey this idea by means of dialogue. You might say something like this: "The troops had been lying flat on their bellies for at least ten minutes. Suddenly the officer was speaking. 'Advance on that hill post' he shouted." Here the action is "continued" the dialogue leads from the temporary inactivity of the troops, to the impression conveyed to the reader, of a sudden advance, occasioned by the words of the officer.

"When it is necessary to increase the speed of the action succinct dialogue will often come to the writer's assistance."

Again, on no account make a character say something just to get the action going, when you can think of no other way of doing this. Only use dialogue when dialogue **Naturally** accelerates the action or quite **Naturally** leads from one event to another.

(C)

To Describe Character.

This is of course the most usual way of using dialogue. It is once again very necessary to insist that every word that is uttered by the character shall be of some actual use to the story. Every word counts, you can go further and say, every comma in the short story must count for something vital.

Mr Michael Joseph writes well with regard to the question of the characters interpreting themselves by their words. His words are well worth your most careful consideration.

"Having made up your mind about your characters,

and having determined their various qualities, ambitious, avarice, fear, devotion, perseverance, and so on, you must set out to express these qualities in the words you put into their mouths. Thus you will create the personality of your characters in the most effective way i.e. by dialogue."

Again you cannot do better than follow the advice of Mr Joseph when he insists, how essential it is that your dialogue shall be intensely "individual."

"The individuality of dialogue is nowhere better illustrated than in the works of Charles Dickens. Mr Pecksniff for example never says anything that could be confused with the speech of other participants in the dialogue. The speech of Micawber, Sam Weller, Mrs Gamp, serves in each instance as a clearly distinctive label. This is the effect to aim at."

There just remain two points to consider with regard to characterisation. The one is how many characters on the average should be employed in the average short story, and and the other is the question of naming the characters.

As the short story is naturally by its very nature limited, so also should the number of characters introduced be limited. As far as possible concentrate on one or two main characters and be careful that the minor characters play "minor" parts. But be careful that the minor characters play some useful part in your story and are not mere puppets and parasites.

"Characters must be kept in their places."

Now for the question of naming characters. This is not really at all a difficult matter. If possible, make the names fit or be **Congenial** to the people you are creating for your short story. You have a very manly type, call him **Jack**, you have an effeminate man of the typical actor type, call him **Archibald** or **Bertram**, or you wish to create a womanly woman, call her Elizabeth, you wish to create the "Butterfly" type, call her Betty. And so on, let the name, as far as possible be a clue to the person.

Dialogue is one of the most important factors, as I have said already, in adding the human touch to the short story. It must only be used when it is of actual "**Use.**"

Practice frequently the writing of dialogue. Depict various types of characters by HOW they speak. Listen to the conversations of those you meet daily and try and discover how in certain situations certain people talk.

In this course so far we have really discussed the ingredients of the short story plot, characterisation, dialogue. We have also discussed the "make up" of the short story and have discovered that it really consists of **Opening, Body and End or Climax.**

In the next part, we must discuss the **Telling** of the Story, in relation to whether the **First** or the **Third** person should be used.

PART SIX.

The Telling of the Story.

We have now arrived at the time when it is necessary to consider how the story should be told. While, I shall discuss the "telling" of the story from the point of view of the first or third person, it must be quite clear that there is no invariable rule. You must tell your story in the way in which you feel you can do yourself most justice.

Practice telling incidents, first of all in the third person and then in the first person, and determine which suits you best. Let us now discuss telling the story in the third person.

A.

Telling the Story in the Third Person.

Probably this method of narration is the most popular and the most easy. In this type of telling, the writer of the story is careful not to intrude his own personality too much; he is, as it were, reporting what others do, and say and think.

"Some stories are so impersonal that they may be said to have no point of view. The third person style of narration is peculiarly suitable to this sort of story."

It must be constantly remembered in the third person telling, that the story is **everything** and the author nobody!

If there is any possible rule about using the third person narration, it is this. Use this style of writing when, for any reason, it is not absolutely essential, that your reader should think you were an eye witness. Also, when you have no very special reason for desiring to convey **vividness**.

B.

Telling the Story in the First Person.

This style of narration requires a good deal of care. It is of course used when the writer wishes to convey the impression

that he was himself present. It is an autobiographical method of narration. The story is told in a manner that infers that the writer is the principal actor in the scene he describes.

Great care is needed that the author does not become so egotistical, that he forgets he is telling a story.

"The greatest care is needed to steer between an egotistic exhibition and an over-modest dullness."

If you want to convey **vividness** then it is as well to use the first person form of narration. It also depends a good deal on the type of story. The very exciting story is far more exciting if the writer writes as though he was a spectator of the thrilling scenes. Let me give you an example. You wish to describe a wonderful rescue and you are not sure whether to use the third or first forms of telling. Compare them and judge for yourself.

"They said, it was wonderful to see Thompson leap from the bridge into the surging torrent." (Third Person.)

"Just as I reached the bridge, I saw Thompson leap into the surging torrent." (First Person,)

Here the First Person, is, I think, obviously superior to the third person.

It largely depends upon commonsense whether you use the third or the first person, it also depends, as I have already said, on your style.

Apart from narration in the third or first persons, there are other forms of telling a story, which need but very brief treatment:

Now and again a story is told by means of a series of letters, but this is rare and the beginner is most strongly advised not to adopt this method. Such a method is likely to become dull and wearisome. and let it be remembered, that the art of letter writing is much on the decline, so that your work in this kind of story telling will be more and more difficult.

Even more rarely than the letter form of narration is the diary method. Unless great skill is used, this merely becomes a series of events and interest is soon apt to be lost.

On the whole it is best to keep, either to the third or the first person. Consider what type of story yours is to be, and use the narration method which does most justice to the type.

Use all the commonsense you possess in the telling of the story. Say to yourself when you begin your story, Am I to be the principal actor or participant in the scenes, or am I merely telling about the adventures of other people. Base your method of narration according to what your conclusion is. Tell your story in the way which you earnestly feel will do it most justice.

PART SEVEN.

A Few General Hints.

It now only remains for me to give you a few general hints about short story writing. First of all it is most necessary that you become thoroughly acquainted with what has been written in these pages. It is not enough to have read perfunctorily what has been written, it must be read, until the matter contained therein, has become your own.

When you come to write your short story have in your mind's eye these points. Think of the story as in three parts, the beginning, the middle, the end. Then think of three main attributes of the story, plot, characterisation, and dialogue. Then having got your mental process in order, consider **how** you are going to actually tell the story and remember the vices and virtues of the third or first person method.

Having then, as it were, completed our equipment for writing the short story, let us discuss a few points which may help the story achieve, that for which it was written, the honour of being printed in imperishable print.

One of the best possible things to do when starting on the art of short story writing, is to write about life that you know. If you live in Bayswater, do not write of the vices of Mayfair, because those who commit vice in Mayfair will continue to do so, and the Editor to whom you submit the story will fail to be impressed. Don't look for a story with an Indian setting, when you have not explored the romance that lurks round the basement window. Do not write of life in smart hotels, when you have only stayed in pseudo first class boarding houses. Do not write of the actions of bishops when you only know the intricacies of the curate life. In a word, do try and write of that part of life, with which you are well acquainted.

Listen to what Mr Joseph says on this point of writing about what you know well.

“There is plenty of interesting material in everyone’s life, however commonplace it may appear at first sight.”

What do you want in your short story? You obviously want the great emotions of life. Hate, Love, Passion, Romance, Tragedy, Happiness, they are everywhere, in your own house, in your own street, in your own soul. Probe your own soul, it can be the store house of many short stories.

“Stories of ordinary, every day people, suburbs, office life, industry, soldiering, country life, shops, restaurants, railways, schools—all have their market.”

At the same time, do not for one instant think that writing of life as you know it, does not allow you to use your imagination. If you have an imaginative gift, by all means use it, But the average writer will be well advised, at anyrate at first, to write of the life he knows. Gradually with practise, he can launch out and write of that which he has not necessarily experienced but that which he imagines.

Again your situations as far as possible should be reasonable. I mean in this way. If you write of a railway porter, make him talk as a railway porter would talk. If you write of a duke (but remember dukes are dangerous to the young story writer) let the duke talk, as a duke would talk. Your characters and situations must be plausible and able to be met with in life. Otherwise you turn your short story unwittingly into a kind of fairy tale, and Editors who demand short stories will not care for fairy tales as a substitute.

Be sure that reading is one of the best preparations for writing. Read story after story, see how it is built up, dissect its plot, examine its characterisation, consider its dialogue. Note all the crises lead up to the climax, note how the story leads gently from start to finish. Imagine yourself the writer of the story and consider whether you would have told it in the same manner. For remember every story that is printed has some authority behind it. It is easy to gibe at those in print and say that it is easy enough, but those who gibe are usually those who have not got into print.

Re-write plots, practise dialogue, practise the making of characters.

You should study certain magazines very carefully and see the *type* of story that is being printed. Write a short story with an idea of a certain market, do not write on mere speculation.

What are the most popular kinds of stories to write? Probably those with a love interest, then those with a mystery setting, then perhaps those with a setting of pure and straightforward thrilling adventure.

Humourous short stories are very difficult to write, but if you can do them well, you have in your possession something that will impress an Editor.

A minor consideration is the title of your story. Try and get the type of title that is suitable for the particular story you have written.

"The majority of short story titles express human interest. A glance at a random collection of stories will confirm this. Good titles always make a positive contribution to the story even if they only act as a kind of literary cement. And the main purpose of the title should not be overlooked: it is to label the story for the reader's benefit."

Use **Commonsense** in the matter of your title and try and put yourself in the position of the reader and ask yourself what you expect a title to be and what you expect it to do for you.

Let me conclude with a few words about sending the manuscript to the Editor. Your story is finished and it is now to be posted to the magazine editor you have selected.

Make your manuscript as neat as possible. See that it is well typewritten and only written on one side of the paper.

See that the title is very clearly marked and that your own name and address accompanies the M.S. Be sure to enclose an addressed envelope and sufficient stamps to cover the cost of the return of the M.S. should it be unfortunately rejected.

Pack the manuscript flat, so that it does not become creased. Address the envelope to The Editor. Do not write

long letters with the short story you send up. What the Editor wants is your story, he has no interest in whether you are married or whether you have written for the parish magazine, if your story is what he wants, it is printed, if it is not what he wants, it is not printed.

Do not ask for interviews with the Editor until there is some good reason. If the Editor likes your work and thinks you are likely to be useful to him, he will send for you.

One last word.

Do not be discouraged by rejection slips. They are the fate of nearly all writers at sometime or other. Keep your early enthusiasm, use commonsense and above all, keep on writing.



Books recommended for use with this Book.

SHORT STORY WRITING FOR PROFIT	by Michael Joseph
WRITING THE SHORT STORY ..	by J. Berg. Esenwein
THE PLOT OF THE SHORT STORY	by Henry Albert Phillips

A Book every Writer
should read

The Author's Handbook

A Guide to Quick and Easy Publication.

By an Old Pressman.

. . CONTAINING . .

How to send MSS.

How to Correct.

Methods of Publishing.

Hints on Copyright.

Choosing a Publisher.

Etc., Etc.

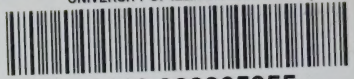
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